Mott

The Two Hundred Million Young Men in Non-Christian Lands

Thirteenth Thousand

THE TWO HUNDRED MILLION YOUNG MEN IN NON-CHRISTIAN LANDS.

ABSTRACT OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICH., IN THE CLOSING MEETING, SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 28, 1899.

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The foreign enterprise of the Young Men's Christian Associations is a war of conquest, and not a wrecking expedition. This International Convention is a great council of war. During the past few days we have been considering the forces of evil which are assailing the young men of the United States and Canada, and how better to overcome their deadly influence. To-night let us turn our minds to the two hundred millions of young men in non-Christian lands. A tremendous burden of responsibility rests upon us to help these vast multitudes of young men. What is the nature and extent of our obligation?

We owe it to the fundamental principles on which our associations rest and which called them into being to reach out the hand of help to the young men of the non-Christian world. According to our inspired basis our associations seek to unite those young men who desire to be the disciples of Jesus Christ in their doctrine and in their lives. How can

we be the true disciples in doctrine and in life of Him who commanded His followers to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and who Himself kept pressing into other cities to preach the gospel, without including in the range of our sympathy and aggressive efforts the young men of all regions where Christ is not known? Again, our basis states that we associate ourselves for the express purpose of extending Christ's kingdom among young men. Among what young men? Surely not among those of the most favored lands alone! No, the only application of this purpose which can satisfy our reason and conscience and the wonderful requirements of our providential history and opportunities must include the young men of the world. One time, several years ago, in conversation with the honored founder of our movement, Sir George Williams, I asked the question, "What was in the minds and hearts of yourself and your associates, Sir George, when you formed the first association?" He replied, "The chief burden on our hearts and minds was to associate ourselves that we might better win our fellow young men for Jesus Christ." And only a few days ago I was with him in three meetings within a day, in all of which he was emphasizing with apostolic fervor that the purpose of our association will never be realized if we neglect the young men of non-Christian lands. If the one through whom the Holy Spirit gave the original impulse which called our organization into being thus defines its central purpose and the scope

of the application of that purpose, we do wisely to hold our association in true line with it.

We owe it to the church to promote the missionary enterprise. This aspect of our obligation is enforced by two considerations. Missions constitute the great work of the church. It is the purpose for which the church exists—"the very purpose," as the Archbishop of Canterbury says, "by which it shall be tried at the last." But how does this concern the Young Men's Christian Associations? In our ranks are being trained the future leaders of the church. Manifestly, therefore, we owe it to the church to help cultivate the missionary spirit in these young men, who some day in the plan of God are to lead the church which has as its chief business missions. Moreover, if our associations have been found to be increasingly useful in Christian lands as servants of the church, we should not withhold this valuable service from the church in those parts of the world where she most needs our help.

We owe it to the best life of our associations to fill them with the missionary spirit. Eleven years traveling among the associations in different countries has led me to form the conclusion that without doubt the most spiritual and most fruitful associations are those in which the missionary spirit most abounds. This is not theory. It is supported by the history of different Christian organizations. As an illustration, let me refer to the Montreal association. From the beginning it has been loyal to the foreign work of the associations. Its contributions

to this part of the work of the International Committee have increased steadily from $1,200 a year, until this year its members will give not less than $6,600 to this vitally important work. Has their other work suffered? At the twenty-fifth anniversary of the secretariat of Mr. Budge in Montreal, he was able to tell us that at least six of his members had become foreign missionaries and twenty-six had entered the work of the ministry and general secretaryship. Their work also shows a continuous line of conversions. And the other things needful have been added unto them. A splendid building has been erected and paid for, although, as we know, the Protestant population of the city is not large. Their physical, educational, social and philanthropic work ranks very high indeed. All this bears in upon us the truth of the words, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Possibly the greatest need of the Young Men's Christian Associations is the need of some mighty objective. It is characteristic of young men that they rise to a great undertaking. I shall never forget what Mr. Robert McBurney said to me once—that he had learned to trust young men when a great burden was placed upon them. When Stanley appealed for a few young men—thirty, I think—to go with him on his last arduous and dangerous journey into the heart of Africa, over twelve hundred wanted to go. Every war and every perilous expedition illustrates the same thing. Our movement needs that which will

appeal to the enterprising, the self-sacrificing and the heroic in young men—something adequate to call out the best life and energies of the associations and to save them from paralyzing selfishness and luxury; something which will drive us more to God. What task could have been placed before us which would do this so well as that of helping the church of Christ reach the two hundred millions of young men in non-Christian lands?

We owe it to our members to inspire them with the missionary passion and to enlist them in promoting the great work of the world-wide missions. There is a tendency among far too many Christian young men to look on the active promotion of the missionary movement as something quite outside the ordinary Christian life. They assume that to help extend Christ's kingdom is purely an optional matter and not obligatory. It must be pressed upon them that an active missionary spirit is inseparable from a real Christian life, and that a man may well question whether he is living the Christian life—that is, having Christ live in him—if he is indifferent to the needs of two hundred millions of young men. To do the will of God we must know the needs of man. Every one of our active members should have an ambition to know the kingdom of Christ among young men—its extent, its progress, its recent triumphs, its problems, its resources. Let us remember that there is no enterprise the study of which and the promotion of which is more broadening, more deepening, more elevating and more inspiring than the enterprise of

the evangelization of the world. No enterprise more broadening—it includes all mankind; none more deepening—it takes us down into the very depths of the designs of God; none more elevating—for nothing more lifts a man out of himself; and surely none more inspiring than that which commanded the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore we do our members great injustice if we fail to bring them into vital and practical relation to the sublime enterprise of missions. In my judgment, the Association Volunteer League, under proper leadership, is the most simple and practical plan for developing the missionary department among the members. Why should not the aggressive pushing of this plan do for the general associations much what the Volunteer Movement has done for the student associations?

We owe it to the young men of non-Christian lands to do all in our power—yes, more, to work in the power of God—on their behalf. Think of their numbers, two hundred millions. Can we grasp these numbers? No, indeed. But prayerful reflection will lend unto them impressive meaning. Think of the need of these millions of young men. It is indescribably awful. We have all heard and seen much of the evils of the liquor traffic in the home lands, but never have I seen such frightful ravages of the drink demon as in the ports of Asia. The opium curse is enslaving in a horrible manner the bodies, minds and souls of tens of millions of men in the far East, and is consuming hundreds of millions of dol-

lars. Bad as impurity is in certain parts of the West, it is much worse all over the East. In the most loathsome and unthinkable forms it is cutting into the best life of the young manhood of those vast regions. Oh, what a gauntlet the young man has to run who would live right in the East! The fearful power of the temptations is seen in the sad wrecking of such an alarmingly large proportion of the young men of the West who go to live in Eastern ports. The gravestones there enforce this fact most impressively. We should remember also that the two hundred millions of young men in non-Christian lands, though they have fiercer temptations, have not the power of resistance with which to meet them that we have as a result of our Christian heredity, Christian environment, and knowledge of Christ Himself. If our association work is needed in these favored lands, many-fold more it is needed in Asia, Africa, and South America. May God keep us from from losing the power of sympathy for our tempted brothers of other climes and races. Rather, as we behold them scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd among ravenous wild beasts, let us be deeply moved not only to feel for them, but, more important still, to go to their rescue.

We owe it to the missionary enterprise in this time of crisis to project and carry out an aggressive forward movement. On my journey around the world I met over twelve hundred missionaries, representing nearly one hundred missionary societies, and they presented an unbroken appeal for more of our workers.

The Young Men's Christian Association went to the mission lands at the call of God through the missionaries. It has never established itself at a centre without the solicitation of the missionaries. They are appealing to us to-day more than at any other one time. It is a time of crisis in most fields. We are confronted by many open doors. We may not be able to enter all of them, but at the most conservative estimate the International Committee and their advisers believe that we should send out five new men to foreign fields this year. What are the posts that we are called upon to man? A strong man should be sent at once to Shanghai to serve as assistant general secretary in that city which has been so well called the New York of China. A convincing appeal has come to us from South America to send out at least one more secretary. It is difficult to decide whether Argentine or Chili presents the stronger claims. At present we have but one representative laboring among the eight millions of young men of the neglected South American continent. Poona, the citadel of Brahminism, should be manned at an early date in response to definite and urgent calls. At least one more man must be sent to Calcutta to help meet the remarkable opportunity among the ten thousand and more students of the city and to relieve the present secretary of growing business interests in order that he may devote himself to the other great problems of his work, both in the city and country. Think of asking two men to lead and develop association work in a capital city of over a million inhabitants. An official

call has reached us from Allahabad, reiterating the request made long ago to place an able student secretary in that only one of five university centres of India which remains unmanned. It would be a shame to delay longer in responding to this appeal.

Time fails me to speak of other fields, some of which present needs fully equal to some of those just mentioned—of Osaka, Japan, with its million people; of Seoul, the capital city of twelve million people; of several cities in China, each having a million or more; of Singapore, of Havana and of Manila. What could be more dangerous than for us to stand before such doors, which God Himself has opened, and to have the ability to enter in, and not to do so? It would necessarily mark the beginning of spiritual atrophy. I have too much faith in the statesmanship of our movement, and in the heroism and spirituality of our members, to believe that we shall turn from these open doors.

We owe it to Jesus Christ to enter these doors of opportunity and to carry the war right into the enemy's camp. Christ clearly taught that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." What has been given unto us? These, among other things: open doors; the confidence of the missionaries; a most efficient organization; successful methods; trained and qualified men to send; adequate financial resources; a vision of the young men of the world evangelized; and spiritual audacity which is not discouraged by the difficulties in the way of the realization of this vision. Such talents afford no

ground for boasting, but rather for deep humiliation before God that we have not made more and better use of them, and for resolution to be far more faithful during the second decade of our foreign work than we have been since we began it at the Philadelphia convention eleven years ago.

What a colossal responsibility rests upon the Young Men's Christian Associations of the Christian lands! Think once more what it means. It involves the moral and spiritual destiny of two hundred millions of young men. It calls for the manning of the great cities of three continents and of the isles that still wait for His law. It means the permeating of the educational centres of all these regions with the Spirit of Christ, that down from them may flow streams of righteousness. Yes, we are called to nothing less than helping the church to mold and train the young manhood of the unevangelized races, and to lay secure foundations for Christian civilization among two-thirds of the human race. Therefore, in the words of Alexander Duff, that great Christian statesman, "Let us arise and resolve, at whatever cost of self-denial, to grapple in right earnest, as we have never yet done, with the stupendous work of supplanting the three thousand years' consolidated empire of Satan in these vast realms by the establishment of Messiah's reign."

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